

VZCZCXYZ0006  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTC #0526 0821011  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 231011Z MAR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8593  
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2643  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0996  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0260  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000526

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UBI, EUR/RPM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/22/2017

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#) [IT](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS: FOREIGN MINISTER VERHAGEN CONDEMNS  
TALIBAN PRISONER EXCHANGE

REF: STATE 36204

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew Schofer, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (SBU) On March 21 during a press conference in Kabul, Dutch Foreign Minister Maxime Verhagen condemned the release of Taliban prisoners in exchange for Italian journalist Daniele Mastrogiacomo. Verhagen said governments should not accommodate hostage-takers, and added that the Dutch government will not give in to demands in a similar situation for fear of encouraging additional hostage situations. "When we create a situation where you can buy the freedom of Taliban fighters for a kidnapped journalist, then in the short term there will no longer be any journalists," he said.

In subsequent meetings with Ambassador Arnall and A/S Fried on March 23, Verhagen reiterated his strong views on Afghanistan.

12. (C) MFA Task Force Uruzgan Coordinator Pieter-Jan Kleiweg de Zwaan echoed his Minister's strong remarks to polmiloff on March 22. Kleiweg said the Dutch government does not subscribe to accommodating demands made by hostage-takers. He added this recent release of Taliban fighters sets a dangerous precedent for additional hostage-taking scenarios of individuals working for NGOs. Kleiweg said that it was "hard enough" to get international NGOs engaged at the local level, and this latest prisoner exchange will further deter international volunteers from working in southern Afghanistan.

ARNALL